
Queen Elizabeth's School

SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

Aims

Queen Elizabeth's School is committed to providing a friendly and safe environment for all our pupils and other members of the Elizabethan community. Pupils have the right to learn and develop in a supportive and secure atmosphere and thereby realise their full potential. We aim to promote thoughtfulness towards and respect for others, and to this end all members of the School community have a responsibility to help promote an atmosphere where bullying is actively discouraged and deemed unacceptable.

The School strives to acknowledge and reward good behaviour and deal promptly and firmly with inappropriate behaviour towards others. The School's discipline system aims to create conditions for an orderly community in which there is mutual respect between all its members.

We also aim to generate a climate of trust where pupils are confident in reporting incidents of bullying. Pupils should understand that withholding information protects bullies and allows them to continue their behaviour. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

In accordance with the Home-School Agreement, which all parents are asked to sign, the Governors expect all parents to ensure that their sons behave in a way that makes a positive contribution to a harmonious school where pupils and staff feel safe and valued, and where the values of diversity, equality and inclusivity are promoted by all.

Our aim is to teach our pupils to behave well and to foster good attitudes. We believe that a fulfilled adult life is founded on good character as much as on the best academic qualifications, and our major aim is to teach pupils to be responsible for their actions.

1. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It is not restricted to an action of a pupil against another pupil and it can be perpetrated by or against anyone in the School community. This includes bullying by pupils of adults and by adults of pupils.

Bullying can take many forms and some of the ways in which it can be manifested are:

- **Physical:** e.g. hitting, kicking, physical intimidation, or taking another's belongings;
- **Verbal:** e.g. name-calling, offensive remarks; using pejorative language about someone's identity or perceived identity;
- **Non-verbal:** e.g. offensive gestures, or offensive remarks transmitted on paper, electronically or otherwise;
- **Emotional:** e.g. being unfriendly, coercing, tormenting, threatening;
- **Exclusion:** e.g. systematic exclusion or isolation of others;
- **Cyber-bullying:** e.g. sending threatening or unkind electronic messages; sharing images (real or produced) to cause distress; or posting derogatory remarks about another person on social media.

There are many reasons why bullying might occur. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation,

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disability, because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities, or it can be motivated by actual or perceived differences between people. Harassment and discrimination of this kind is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 and the School has a duty to ensure that all forms of prejudice-motivated bullying are dealt with firmly. Bullying on any ground will not be tolerated by the School.

Bullying does not have to occur on School premises for it to be covered by this Policy and any reported incidents of bullying which occur off the School's premises will be investigated and dealt with in exactly the same way as any incident that occurs on School premises.

2. Cyber bullying

Technology is a part of our daily lives but it has also provided a new medium for bullying. Cyber-bullying can happen at any time of the day or night and there is potentially a much larger audience to the unacceptable behaviour.

Cyber-bullying can include sending offensive or threatening messages, via mediums such as email, text or instant messaging services, to, or about, another person. It may also include posting derogatory or offensive remarks on social media; taking, manipulating and/or posting images online, or sending them via social media; or posing as another person online.

It is illegal for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication with a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, is a threat, or is information which is known or believed to be false by the sender. As such, the School cannot and will not tolerate any form of cyber-bullying.

Awareness around the issues of cyber-bullying and staying safe online are covered through the Personal Development Time programme.

3. Racism

Bullying of a member of the School community on the basis of their race, religion, beliefs, colour, nationality, national origins or ethnic origins will not be tolerated, nor will any form of discrimination based on these or any other grounds. For the purposes of this policy, racism includes prejudice towards religious faith groups, such as antisemitism or islamophobia.

4. Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying occurs when someone is made to feel victimised, ridiculed, threatened or isolated because of their sexuality or perceived sexuality. Like all other forms of bullying, homophobic bullying can be perpetrated through verbal insults, taunting, rumour spreading, exclusion from social groups, physical assault or online. Homophobic bullying can also consist of the threat to 'out' someone to family and friends, even if the victim is not gay.

The School will take very seriously any incidences of homophobic bullying and those involved will be dealt with appropriately. Casual insults derived from homophobia (for example, the use

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of the word 'gay' in a pejorative sense), even when the speaker does not believe they are speaking in a homophobic context, will not be tolerated in School.

The School will similarly treat biphobic bullying, where people are targeted for being, or being perceived to be bisexual. This can include denying someone's bi identity or refusing to accept it.

6. Transphobic bullying

Transphobic bullying occurs when someone is made to feel victimised, ridiculed, threatened or isolated because they are, or are perceived to be, trans.

Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably, with the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans identities are diverse, and people may refer to themselves in a variety of ways including (but not limited to) transgender, non-binary, cross-dresser, or gender queer. Not all trans people wish to transition legally or medically to another gender through a process of gender reassignment.

The School will treat very seriously any instances of transphobic bullying, or the use of offensive or pejorative language relating to transgendered identities or experiences.

The School will promote understanding and respect for trans people and will ensure that the appropriate support is in place to enable any trans pupils or staff to fulfil their potential as equally valued members of the School community.

6. Sexist bullying

Sexism is prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex. The School will not tolerate discriminatory language or behaviour directed towards female staff, visitors, or pupils from other schools.

Sexism can contribute to sexual bullying, which includes the sexualisation of others, harassment or coercive behaviours.

7. Ableist bullying

Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs. This can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability. For this policy, this also includes bullying behaviour towards those with a special educational need (such as autism or ADHD).

The School seeks to build understanding of neurodiversity, as well as taking steps to support access for those with disabilities.

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8. Anti-bullying statement

The School does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Bullying, in whatever form, can have a debilitating effect on the victim and cause them to lose confidence or feel threatened or vulnerable. No member of the School community should bully or harass any other person.

All those who work at or are taught at the School are to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Any incidents of bullying will be treated as an extremely serious infringement of School policy and they will be met with severe disciplinary action. A serious incident of bullying may lead to those pupils involved being suspended for a fixed period or excluded permanently.

9. Prevention of bullying at the School

The School seeks to minimise the occurrence of bullying and ensure that incidents are dealt with appropriately. The following measures have been put in place to help achieve this:

- Encouraging a culture in which pupils and staff feel comfortable sharing their concerns confidentially;
- Assemblies and tutoring sessions to make all boys aware of the School's Policy on bullying and to reinforce both the importance of positive relationships and online safety;
- The Personal Development Time curriculum actively promotes British values of equality, diversity, inclusion and respect for others;
- Guest speakers, including Old Elizabethans, are used to share their insights and experiences and positively represent those with characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010 - aiding pupils' understanding of key issues and fostering good relations;
- The pastoral curriculum addresses key societal issues and is kept under constant review so as to be responsive to emerging issues (such as in tackling racial injustice, sexual harassment, or violence against women and girls);
- Student leadership is enabled and supported in order that a positive example can be set for younger pupils, with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion prefects appointed within the Vice-Captain team, supported by a wider team of EDI Ambassadors;
- Clubs and societies seek to celebrate different cultures and identities, for example LGBTQE, or faith groups (such as Sikh Society, Jewish Society etc.) and should be open and welcoming to any pupils wishing to attend;
- Social action and academic partnerships with local girls' schools provide pupils the opportunity and experience of working collaboratively alongside girls and young women;

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- All members of the School community are expected to exercise self-discipline and behave in a courteous and respectful manner towards others;
- Active bystander training undertaken by pupils to equip them to safely and appropriately intervene to prevent bullying or discrimination and to support the victim;
- Information resources and training opportunities for pupils and parents regarding online safety and the healthy use of technology;
- Monitoring and filtering systems are in place with respect to the managed 1:1 digital device programme to detect and respond, often in real-time, to misuse;
- Monitoring and filtering, as well as a weekly digital wellbeing check, provides insight to senior pastoral staff about pupils who may give cause for concern in terms of their wellbeing, so that appropriate interventions can be made;
- Pupils in Years 7-11 are prohibited from using a mobile phone anywhere during the School day (unless permitted to do so under supervision in the Front Office for the express purpose of contacting their parents/guardians with time-sensitive information, e.g. changes to travel plans);
- Students in the Sixth Form are prohibited from using a mobile phone during the School day outside of their occasional use to support study in the Queen's Library and Café 1573;
- Play areas are segregated by age, whilst lunch and bus queues and are supervised by staff and/or prefects;
- The School liaises with primary schools to identify potentially vulnerable pupils at an early stage;
- All members of staff are equipped to deal with any incidents of bullying which are reported by pupils, aided by training through their induction process;
- High priority is given to continuity in pastoral care throughout both the Lower and Middle School and in the Sixth Form. This enables tutors to really get to know their form and build up a relationship of trust which in turn will help them identify early signs of bullying behaviour;
- Form tutors and members of the Senior Leadership Team meet with pupils on a regular basis for one-to-one bespoke pastoral checks. This provides teaching staff with an opportunity to get to know the pupils in more depth and thereby enables them to detect any signs that bullying is occurring, whether as victim or perpetrator;
- All incidents of bullying are logged and reviewed by senior staff. Where bullying leads to a suspension or permanent exclusion this is reported to the Governing Body who monitor pupil discipline, as well as progress towards the School's equality objectives;

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- Senior pupils are encouraged to act as role models for those who need support. A peer mentoring system led by senior pupils is in place for those for whom support from an older pupil is considered the most suitable input;
- All pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for reporting incidents of bullying to a staff member or senior pupil without fear of retribution or ridicule;
- Clear channels for parents to report concerns about alleged bullying. These are explained to parents at least once a year;
- One-to-one support is available for pupils when a Year Head decides that it is appropriate and a Special Needs co-ordinator is available to facilitate this where pupils have a special educational need or disability;
- Familiarisation with the School's Bullying Policy and Information and Communication Technology Policies is part of the routine induction of all new staff members and is revisited during staff training and development;
- This Policy is kept under regular review.

10. Procedures for dealing with bullying

- Pupils who have been bullied (or think they might be being bullied) should report this to their Form Tutor or Head of Year, with assistance as required from a parent, fellow pupil, or another member of staff;
- Parents who have any concerns about bullying should contact the relevant Form Tutor or Year Head in the first instance;
- When an incident of bullying is reported or discovered it will be dealt with immediately by a senior member of staff or Year Head in conjunction with the Form Tutor. The alleged victim will be treated sympathetically at all times;
- The School will promote the safety and security of the individual pupils involved. There are various strategies that may be employed when a case of bullying is reported and these will depend on the nature and seriousness of the bullying and the particular circumstances of each instance. The parents of an alleged victim will be contacted by the Year Head and, where appropriate, a meeting arranged;
- A serious incident of bullying may lead to those involved being suspended from school for a fixed period or excluded permanently. Where a pattern of bad behaviour has emerged then the exclusion may be permanent. In all cases the parents of a pupil accused of bullying will be required to visit the School to discuss the matter and to undertake to support the School's strong line on bullying;
- The School will also consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether the pupil engaging in bullying may need additional support themselves.

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- Whatever decisions are taken, the School will continue to monitor the situation and offer on-going support to the victim (and the perpetrator, if needed), for example with support from the School counsellor.
- The School will keep records of all meetings and decisions taken to help identify emerging patterns of behaviour and take appropriate action when necessary.
- Where appropriate, the School will consider if there is a need to report the bullying as a safeguarding or criminal law issue.

11. Promoting this Policy

It is important that everyone in the School community is aware of and abides by this Policy. Therefore:

- Pupils are encouraged to be supportive of each other and reminded of the School's attitude to bullying at assemblies and by their Form Tutors;
- Staff are kept informed through information on eQE, inductions for new staff and during staff training and development;
- Parents are informed on tours (where appropriate), in the School's prospectus, in our Home-School Agreement and at our annual briefing meetings;
- This Policy can easily be located on eQE.

12. Responsibility for this Policy

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for this Policy, supported by the Deputy Head (Pastoral). The named Governor for Safeguarding is the member of the Governing Body with a special interest in preventing bullying, alongside members of the Discipline Committee.

If any person is concerned that the School has not effectively addressed bullying, they should refer to the School's Complaints Procedure in order that the concerns can be fully addressed.

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LINKED
POLICIES

- ❑ *Boundless* (Priorities for Development 2025-2030)
- ❑ Equal Opportunities Policy
- ❑ Home-School Agreement
- ❑ Information and Communication Technology Policy
- ❑ Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- ❑ Pupil Discipline Policy
- ❑ Safeguarding Policy
- ❑ Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- ❑ Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy
- ❑ Whistleblowing Policy

USEFUL
RESOURCES

- ❑ **Childline**
www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111
- ❑ **Anti-bullying Alliance**
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- ❑ **Bullying UK**
www.bullyinguk.co.uk
Helpline 0808 800 2222
- ❑ **Kidscape**
www.kidscape.org.uk
020 7730 3300
Parents' Helpline 020 7823 5430
- ❑ **Gov.uk** - <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school>
- ❑ **Department for Education** – Preventing and tackling bullying
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- ❑ **Stonewall** – An introduction to supporting LGBT young people
<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/introduction-supporting-lgbt-young-people>

Approved by the Governing Body on 26 February 2026

Signed

A.N. Gaskell, Chair of the Governing Body